

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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BELGRADE ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, CZ
SUBJECT: JOSEF GROHMAN CONVICTED OF ESPIONAGE

REFS: (A) PRAGUE 0039 NOTAL (B) PARIS 01852 NOTAL
(C) PRAGUE 0063 NOTAL

1. AS WESTERN NEWS SERVICES HAVE REPORTED, THE CONVICTION OF
ING. JOSEF GROHMAN, CHIEF EDITOR OF STATE PUBLISHING HOUSE FOR
TECHNICAL LITERATURE (SNTB) AND CHAIRMAN OF CZECHOSLOVAK
COMMISSION FOR UNESCO AT THE TIME OF HIS ARREST IN OCTOBER 1976,
FOR ESPIONAGE IN THE SERVICE OF AN UNNAMED FOREIGN POWER WAS
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ANNOUNCED IN THE PRAGUE PRESS DECEMBER 20. HE WAS SENTENCED
TO 13 AND ONE HALF YEARS IMPRISONMENT, LOSS OF
CZECHOSLOVAK TITLES AND CONFISCATION OF HIS PROPERTY. BY
"COINCIDENCE" CONVICTION WAS REPORTED ON SAME DAY AS LOCAL
PRESS MARKED 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF FORMATION OF SOVIET CHEKA
(SECRET POLICE).

2. AS REF B NOTED, SEVERAL FRENCH INTELLECTUALS, FORMER ASSOCIATES OF GROHMAN IN THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS (IUS), IN JANUARY SENT A LETTER TO CZECHOSLOVAK AMBASSADOR IN PARIS EXPRESSING SURPRISE AT THE ARREST AND HOPES THAT THE GOC WOULD ENSURE FAIR TREATMENT FOR GROHMAN. AT THE TIME IT WAS THOUGHT THAT OTHER FORMER IUS ACTIVISTS, SUCH AS OLOF PALME, MIGHT JOIN IN THE PROTEST, BUT WAS AWARE OF NOT FURTHER ACTIONS

BY WESTERN EUROPEANS.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS: GROHMAN'S CONVICTION MAY SPARK NEW PROTESTS BY HIS OLD IUS ASSOCIATES. FROM THE LIMITED INFORMATION WE HAVE ON GROHMAN THERE IS NOTHING TO SUGGEST THAT GROHMAN HAS ANY CONNECTION WITH PROPONENTS OF LIBERALIZAT CN VT DUHE SYSTEM HERE OR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM SUCH AS CHARTER 77. ON THE CONTRARY, HE REACHED THE HIGH POINTS IN HIS CAREER BEFORE 1968 (DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE 1963-66, FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER 1966-67), DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT IN 1968 AND SURFACED AGAIN AS CHIEF EDITOR OF SNTB IN 1969. WHILE THE REGIME HAS UNDOUBTEDLY USED HIS CASE TO PROMOTE "VIGILANCE" AGAINST FOREIGN SUBVERSION ATTEMPTS, NO EVIDENCE SO FAR AVAILABLE SUGGESTS CHARGES AGAINST HIM WERE TRUMPED UP AS PART OF ANTI-DISSIDENCE CAMPAIGN.

4. OTHER REPERCUSSIONS: IN JANUARY, PRESS COMMENT INDICATED GROHMAN HAD BEEN SPYING FOR THE FRG (REF C). THE PRESS HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEVER MENTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT AMONG HIS OTHER ACTIVITIES HE WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK-BRITISH SOCIETY. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT PROPAGANDA USE WILL BE MADE OF THESE REAL OR ALLEGED AFFILIATIONS IN COMING WEEKS.
BYRNE

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